

REMARKS

In view of the following remarks, Applicant respectfully requests reconsideration and allowance of the subject application. Applicant has made
5 appropriate amendments to claims which places the subject application into condition for allowance.

In a telephone interview on 2/22/05, the Examiner and Applicant discussed the claims and cited prior art. An agreement was reached on the allowability of independent claim 14 and its dependent claim 15. Reasons
10 agreed on for such allowability include that the prior art does not teach "respective walls separating adjacent pairs of vacuum chambers along the platen" as recited in claim 14. In addition, there is no teaching or suggestion in the cited art regarding "adjacent pairs of vacuum chambers along the platen". Rather, the prior art (i.e., Juan, US Patent 6,367,999) shows 4 chambers aligned
15 singly along the platen. There is no discussion or indication in Juan of any pairing of these singly aligned chambers. Thus, an assertion that Juan teaches "adjacent pairs of vacuum chambers along the platen" can only be supported using Applicant's claim as a guide, which is impermissible.

20 **35 U.S.C. §102 Claim Rejections**

Claims 1, 14-18, 20-21 and 24 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(a) as being allegedly anticipated by Juan et al. (US 6,367,999) (hereinafter, "Juan"). As noted above, the Examiner and Applicant have reached agreement on the allowability of claims 14 and 15. Claims 1, 16-18, 20-21 and 24 have been
25 canceled without prejudice. Accordingly, the §102(a) rejection is moot.

35 U.S.C. §103 Claim Rejections

Claims 22 and 26 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as allegedly being unpatentable over Juan and further in view of Watton et al. (US 6,336,722). As noted above, claims 22 and 26 have been canceled without
5 prejudice, making the rejection moot.

Claims 3, 6-10, 23 and 27 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as allegedly being unpatentable over Juan. Claims 3, 6-10, 23 and 27 have been canceled without prejudice. Accordingly, the §103(a) rejection is moot.

As noted above, claims 2 and 4 depend from claim 1 and therefore
10 include the elements of claim 1. That is, claims 2 and 4 include a plurality of vacuum chambers having a plurality of openings providing permanent air communication between the platen and a vacuum source.

Allowable Subject Matter

15 Claims 11-13, and 25 are expressly allowed. Claims 2, 4, 5, and 19 are objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. Applicant has amended claims 2, 4, 5, and 19 to include limitations of their respective base claims and any
20 intervening claims. Accordingly, claims 2, 4, 5, and 19 are now allowable.

As noted above, claims 14 and 15 are also allowable according to agreement reached during a telephone interview between the Examiner and Applicant.

Conclusion

Pending claims 2, 4, 5, 11-15, 19 and 25 are in condition for allowance. Applicant respectfully requests reconsideration and issuance of the subject application. If any issues remain that preclude issuance of this application, the
5 Examiner is urged to contact the undersigned attorney before issuing a subsequent Action.

Respectfully Submitted,

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